

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 and 14-24 are pending. By this Amendment, independent claims 1 and 14 are amended to even more clearly distinguish over the applied references, claims 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 15 and 17-20 are amended to be consistent with amended claims 1 and 14, respectively, and claims 21-24 are added. The amendments are supported throughout the original application, for example, in Figs. 4 and 5 and at page 16, line 17-page 17, line 13 and page 22, lines 11-22. Thus, no new matter is added.

The Office Action objects to claim 19. By this Amendment, the objection to claim 19 is overcome. Similar amendments have been made to claim 20. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-12 and 14-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Lof et al. (U.S. 2004/0160852) in view of Hayashi et al. (U.S. 2001/0035897). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Even if the Fig. 7a embodiment of Lof et al. is modified "to make the entire passage from the gap to the port 46 of Lof, including portion A, lyophilic" in view of Hayashi et al., as proposed by the Office Action at page 4, lines 3-7, the combinations of features recited in Applicants' independent claims 1 and 14 would not result. In particular, Lof et al. does not disclose the claimed "protruding portion that protrudes radially inward toward and opposes a side surface of the outer circumferential part of the substrate held on the holder such that a gap is provided between the protruding portion and the side surface of the outer circumferential part of the substrate held by the holder" The portion of the member 117 of Lof et al. that opposes the side surface of the substrate W has no protruding portion that protrudes radially inward toward and opposes the side surface of the substrate. The portions of member 117 that protrude inwardly are located below the substrate W, and thus do not

oppose the side surface of the substrate to form a gap between the protruding portion and the substrate side surface as recited in Applicants' independent claims.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 14, along with all of their dependent claims, are patentable over Lof et al. and Hayashi et al. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 1-7, 11, 14, 15 and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Lof et al. in view of Garcia et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,988,327). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that even if Lof et al. is modified by Garcia et al. "to replace the edge seal member 117 of Lof with the edge platform 110 of Garcia ..." as proposed on page 9 of the Office Action, the combinations of features recited in Applicants' independent claims 1 and 14 would not result. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that the uppermost part of Garcia et al. internal channel 110e, which the Office Action labels with reference letter "C" on page 9 of the Office Action, does not correspond to the claimed downward facing lyophilic surface because it is an internal part of a channel that communicates with an outlet 110c. Furthermore, the portion labeled "C" in the Office Action is not a downward facing surface of a protruding portion that protrudes radially inward toward and opposes a side surface of the outer circumferential part of a substrate. Thus, Lof et al. modified by Garcia et al. as proposed in the Office Action would not result in the combinations of features recited in independent claims 1 and 14.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 14, along with their dependent claims, are patentable over Lof et al. and Garcia et al. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Request for Continued Examination
Petition for Extension of Time
Amendment Transmittal

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